

THE
REVERENCE *445.28.121*
WHICH
IS DUE
TO
THE NAME
OF
G O D. *1-4*

A
S E R M O N,
Preached before the
S O C I E T I E S
FOR THE
REFORMATION OF MANNERS,
AT GLASGOW, JANUARY 13TH, 1761.
AND PUBLISHED AT THEIR REQUEST.

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208th



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TO
T H E N A M E
OF
G O D.

A
S E R M O N.

BY
W I L L I A M C R A I G, M. A.
ONE OF THE MINISTERS OF GLASGOW. K

PSALM XCIX. 3.

Let them praise thy great and terrible name; for it is holy.

G L A S G O W:
PRINTED AND SOLD BY R. AND A. FOULIS
M.DCC.LXI.

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THE
REVIEW

OF

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TO

THE NEW

OF

GOLD



WILLIAM H. STUBBS

ONE OF THE EDITORS OF THE REVIEW

LONDON

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THE REVERENCE WHICH IS
DUE TO THE NAME OF GOD.

JAMES V. 12.

BUT, ABOVE ALL THINGS, MY BRE-
THREN, SWEAR NOT, NEITHER
BY HEAVEN, NEITHER BY THE
EARTH, NEITHER BY ANY OTHER
OATH; BUT LET YOUR YEA BE
YEA, AND YOUR NAY NAY, LEST
YOU FALL INTO CONDEMNATION.

ON occasions of this nature, you have
often heard of the obligations which
every Christian is under, to discountenance
and check the practice of iniquity, and to
encourage and promote the practice of morality,
so far as his influence can reach. You
have likewise often heard of the methods

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by which a Christian, according to the sphere and opportunities which providence has given him, should endeavour to promote this useful and important work. I have therefore thought it might not be improper or unuseful, at a meeting of this kind, to take under our consideration some of those particular instances of wickedness, which may chiefly claim the attention of those who would wish and endeavour to promote the work of reformation, and to set their hurtful and immoral nature in a proper light. With this view, I have read to you the words of the apostle James, where he prohibits, in a very solemn manner, an instance of impiety, the prevalence and growth of which I persuade myself hath been observed by every good man with

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grief and indignation; I mean the practice of swearing rashly and irreverently by the name or works of God in common conversation. "Above all things," says the apostle, "swear not" &c. He prefixes this solemn preface to his admonition, "above all things," in order to denote the peculiar immorality of the crime, against which he gives the admonition; and he concludes it with an awful threatening, "lest ye fall into condemnation," i. e. lest ye fall into that condemnation, which God has revealed from heaven against all wickedness in general, and in a particular manner against the sin of those who "take his name in vain." When the apostle says, "neither by Heaven, neither by the earth, nor by any other oath," he refers, 'tis pro-

bable, to those forms of swearing that were customary in the age in which he lived; when some imagined, that if they did not swear expressly by the name of God, their speech was innocent. But our Saviour had formerly declared, Matth. v. 34.—And here the apostle, after his example, declares, that swearing by any thing that had a relation to God, and was wholly under his influence, did partake of the guilt of profanely swearing by himself: and this, by the way, should be considered as a sufficient argument with every Christian against the like forms of swearing, which have been introduced in latter times.

That the apostle in the text, and our Saviour in the place referred to, do not prohibit all swearing to the truth in mat-

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ters of importance, and when it is gone about in a reverend and becoming manner, might be made evident from several considerations: such as,

1. That the confirmation of truths, of importance to be known, by a solemn oath, when done in a proper manner, is an act of piety to God, and an expression of that reverence and homage which we owe unto his name; and therefore tends rather to increase than diminish a sense of God, and of the obligations of religion in the minds of men.

2. It is of great use to ascertain the truth of important facts, and to bind the consciences of men, by this solemn tie, when other ties are insufficient; and thus to put an end to controversies that might

otherwise subsist, to the great disturbance of society. Hence the apostle to the Hebrews, chap. vi. 16. speaks of it in this light, as an useful thing, which undoubtedly he never would have done, had it been forbidden by the laws of Christianity. "Men," says he, "swear by the greater; and an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife." To these considerations may be joined the examples of holy men in scripture, particularly of the apostle Paul, who frequently appeals to God for the truth of what he says, Rom. i. 9. "God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers." 2 Cor. i. 18. "But as God is true, our word toward you

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“ was not yea and nay.” And, ver. 23.
“ I call God for a record upon my soul,
“ that to spare you I came not as yet into
“ Corinth.” Gal. i. 20. “ Now the things
“ which I write unto you, behold, before
“ God, I lie not.” 1 Theff. ii. 5. “ For,
“ neither at any time used we flattering
“ words, as ye know, nor a cloke of cove-
“ tousness, God is witness.” What is still
more, we have the example of our blessed
Saviour himself, “ who did no sin, and in
“ whose mouth there was no guile,” Matth.
xxvi. 63, 64. Our Saviour, when he stood
before the supreme council of Jerufalem,
was adjured by the living God to inform
the council if he was the Christ, (which
was the manner by which a man was put
upon his oath among the Jews) our Saviour,

I say, being thus adjured, or put upon his oath, immediately answered the question which was asked him.

From these considerations, it appears, that, on great occasions, an oath may be lawfully administered, and taken by us, if it is done in a reverend and serious manner. The practice, therefore, prohibited by the apostle in the text, is that of swearing needlessly and irreverently by the name or works of God in common conversation; in which the apostle, after the example of our Lord, would have Christians to use no more than a simple and plain asseveration. Now, besides the express laws of Christianity in this matter, the immoral and pernicious nature of this practice will sufficiently appear from the following considerations.

1. It has a natural and fatal tendency to weaken in the minds of men a sense of that regard and veneration which is due to God. The foundation of all religion must be laid in a serious impression of the being, perfections, and providence of God, and of that regard which mankind owe him, as they are the subjects of his moral kingdom. But is it not extremely obvious, that swearing by, or appealing to the name of God, or imprecating on ourselves and others his wrath and condemnation, unnecessarily, and on every trifling occasion, and oftentimes without so much as attending to what we say, must of necessity destroy this reverend and serious sense of God, and bring us to the habit of thinking of him, (if we think of him at all) of

speaking of him, and of behaving towards him, as if he was a being of the utmost insignificance. We know from our experience, that things of the greatest moment and solemnity, by being introduced into discourse on every frivolous occasion, and without attending to their nature, with that regard which is due to their solemnity, come at length to be considered by us as matters of indifference. The practice, therefore, of appealing to the name of God, rashly and irreverently, and on every slight occasion that occurs, inevitably tends to make this venerable name become of very little significancy and weight with us; and can hardly fail, in time, to lead us to a deliberate and determined disregard of him. Much more is this likely to be the

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consequence, when the name of God is introduced into the very scenes of debauchery and wickedness; which, 'tis to be feared, is frequently the case; his sacred name being interposed when things are said and done that a wise man and a Christian ought to be ashamed of. But was the name of God never thought of, never mentioned by us, * but on just and great occasions, and then attended to with that regard

* It is reported of the Hon. ROBERT BOYLE, Esq; who was distinguished by his literature, and ingenious researches after knowledge, as well as by his eminent piety and virtue, that he never mentioned the name of GOD without a pause, and visible stop in his discourse. The custom of this great and good man, tho', at first sight, it may seem some what formal and precise, yet would

naturally tend to keep alive that inward veneration for the Deity, by which the whole of his character was strongly marked. It would serve at least to preserve in his own mind, a sense of the immorality of inattention to the name and works of God, and of that irreverence which is expressed and promoted by thoughtless and customary oaths, and to place it in a proper light, to the view of others.

which is due to its meaning and significance, this might have a happy tendency to preserve that serious sense of God in the consciences of men, which, as has been said, is the great foundation of all religion.

2. The practice forbidden by the apostle, in our text, tends natively to weaken, in the minds of men, a sense of the sacredness, and awful obligation of more solemn oaths.

I hope it is unnecessary to insist upon the criminal and pernicious nature of the sin of perjury. It is undeniably one of the most audacious affronts that men can offer to the eternal God, deliberately and solemnly to call upon him to be the witness and voucher of a lie. It does withal the greatest injury to men: it weakens and de-

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destroys the force of that which is designed;
 and is, in its nature fitted, to be a principal support of truth, justice, and order in society. Whatever therefore, tends to make the obligation of an oath less sensible and sacred in the eyes of men, or to take off from that solemnity and weight, with which it ought to ly upon their consciences, must be of a very criminal and hurtful nature. But it will not require much reasoning to show, that this is the natural tendency of swearing rashly and irreverently in common conversation. An oath will appear so much the less sacred and venerable a thing, as it grows familiar and common, and is taken by us without a due attention to its nature and significance: and he who allows himself in oaths

and imprecations on every trifling occasion, and in the very midst of his impertinence and folly, will come in time to feel nothing very extraordinary or sacred in them, when taken on more important and serious occasions.

If a person is accustomed to swear needlessly, and without temptation, in his ordinary discourse, he will not, one would think, be easily restrained from swearing falsely, and deliberately, when prompted to it by some visible and strong temptation: nor is it to be thought that a person who can imprecate the damnation of God upon himself, for no reason at all, and without the least dread of such a tremendous thing, should be much deterred, by the dread of it, from swearing to a fals-

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hood, which his interests or his passions strongly led him to declare: and, not improbably, this wanton prostitution and debasement of an oath, hath not a little contributed to make the crime of perjury appear so slight a thing as (especially in certain matters) it is said to do.†

† It is not meant by what is here said, that all those who are guilty of swearing rashly and irreverently in common discourse, may for that reason be suspected of swearing falsely and dishonestly in more solemn oaths: It must be allowed, there is a principle of honour and integrity, and a regard for reputation, which prevents the crime of perjury, among many who are guilty of the sin of which I am now discoursing. But what is meant to be asserted is, that the practice naturally tends to weaken in the minds of men, a sense

of the religious obligation of more solemn oaths; or to destroy that influence and weight which the principle of piety, and a regard to the omniscience and moral government of God, should give them on the consciences of men; and it is submitted to the candid reader to determine, what hurtful influence it must have on the welfare of society, to remove the force and weight of this religious principle in the matter of an oath.

It might also deserve our notice, on this subject, if the precipitant and inattentive manner in which more so-

3. Setting aside the consideration of these pernicious effects, it is in its own nature an act of great impiety, and a gross expression of irreverence and contempt of God. Is it not a manifest expression of contempt, to employ the name of Him, whom all the hosts of heaven adore, as an idle implement in our discourse, as the attendant of our levity and folly, nay of our debauchery and wickedness? By the name of God is signified every thing that is great, adorable, or lovely: but by the practice against which the apostle speaks,

solemn oaths are usually administered and taken, may not have contributed to diminish their solemnity, and a sense of their importance. Those whose province it is to administer a solemn oath, would per-

haps do an eminent service to society, if they performed this office with some proper solemnity and pause, expressive of its awful and important nature.

this name is used as if it were an empty sound, or a thing that might be sported with: especially the shocking practice of calling on his vengeance and damnation upon ourselves and others; what is this, but to treat, that, as insignificant, or as the subject of our jest, which is able to make the heavens and the earth to tremble.

To give us the more sensible conviction of the truth of what is now said, let us try the experiment in a case that is not unfamiliar: let us put the case, that the name of a departed friend or father, who was highly beloved, and honoured when alive, and whose memory is feelingly remembered and esteemed, now that he is gone; that his name and memory were used with the same wantonness and levity with which the

name of God is used by this impiety: suppose that in every trifling and vain discourse, and in the midst of our laughter and amusements, we heard the name of such a friend or father thus sportfully and ridiculously introduced; and try if we could bear it patiently, or if it would not strike us with the greatest indignation. If we will reflect on the situation of our minds in this matter, we shall find, if we have any sensibility in our nature, that we cannot think or speak of a valuable and beloved friend after he is gone, without some strong emotions of tenderness and reverence: nor do we ever chuse to hear his name so much as mentioned in discourse, but when it is done with proper marks of honour and esteem, and by those who from the know-

ledge of his worth can mingle their concern and tenderneſs with ours, in reflecting on his memory: far leſs could we bear to have his name wantonly and inſignificantly introduced into every trifling diſcourſe. It is needleſs, ſurely, to inſiſt upon it; that to treat the name of the adorable Author of the world with the like marks of wantonneſs and diſregard, muſt be an infinitely more hateful thing, and ſhould ſtrike us with a proportionably deeper indignation.

Theſe few obſervations may ſuffice to ſhew the impious and hurtful nature of the practice againſt which the apoſtle gives the ſolemn admonition in our text: to which might be ſubjoined, as a ſingular aggravation of its guilt, its ſenſeleſſneſs and

folly, and the want of all temptation to it. It serves no one desirable purpose in human life; it adds neither ornament nor weight to our discourse; it neither promotes our interest, nor is subservient to our pleasure; and is therefore one of the most ridiculous and useless vices that ever was contrived; and, when practised before those who profess to entertain a reverence for God, is an unmannerly and insolent, as well as an impious and immoral practice.

It is but a poor apology that is sometimes made in the defence or extenuation of this crime, that we have got into the habit of it, which we are not able to restrain; and that we commit it when we are not conscious of doing so. If it is an hurtful and immoral thing, our guilt is so much

the more highly aggravated, that we have brought ourselves into the habit of committing it, and have so totally dismissed the fear of God from before our eyes, that offending and affronting him in the grossest manner, hath become the natural and habitual employment of our lives. This, however, is a false as well as a frivolous apology. Is there a man, how much soever accustomed to the practice, that does not abstain from it in certain companies, and on some occasions? Does not a child restrain the strongest habit of this kind, in the presence of his father, if he knows his great aversion to it, and that he would be apt to disinherit or disgrace him for the commission of it? Or is there any man, who would not overcome the most invete-

rate habit of this nature, if he believed that his credit or estate depended on his doing so? If the presence of the great Jehovah, and the dread of his tremendous displeasure, cannot have the same effect, our inability, and the power of habit, cannot be pled in our excuse; but the misconduct flows from a folly and impiety, which is altogether without excuse, viz. that the fear of man, and the motives of this world, have a stronger influence upon our conduct, than the fear of God, and the motives of Eternity. Isaiah li. 12. "Who art
" thou, that thou shouldest be afraid of a
" man, that shall die, and of the son of
" man, that shall be made as grass? and
" forgettest the Lord thy Maker?"

Brethren, what has been delivered, is

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not intended, merely, as an admonition against the sin, of which our apostle speaks; for it is presumable, that there are few, who stand in need of such an admonition, in a religious assembly of this kind; but another, and the principal design of this discourse, is to represent to such as have a due reverence for God, and a desire to promote the happiness of men, the great importance of their doing what they can to discountenance and check the progress of this wickedness among those to whom their influence can reach.

From the above considerations, you may see its criminal and hurtful nature; and you cannot but have observed, to what a shameful pitch it has of late years spread itself amongst us.

I think I can remember, tho' I am not among the oldest men in the assembly, when this species of wickedness was but a singularity amongst us, and when a notorious swearer would have been marked in the neighbourhood, as a monster of impiety: but, now, it has become so popular and common, that one can scarce pass through the streets, but he shall have his ears grated with this profanity. Our very children, of ten or a dozen of years, are such proficient in the crime, as one would think might have required their being previously hardened in a course of wickedness for many years.

It is the duty, therefore, of every man who fears the Lord, and is a lover of society, to employ the influence which Pro-

vidence has given him, to stop the growth of this prodigious enormity. Parents, in a special manner, should have their zeal and indignation roused on this occasion: their love and pity to their children should awaken their attention, and alarm their fears. Should this impiety continue to prevail, and spread, as it has done, for some years past, it will be very difficult, if not impossible, to preserve our children, by the strictest care, from its contagious influence: and several parents, tho' not apprized of it, have cause to apprehend that their children have already caught the poisonous example.

But, it may be asked, by what methods is it possible to restrain the progress of this wickedness. In answer to this, I would

observe, that if every man, who has a just reverence for God, would, in a soft and modest manner, testify the anguish which he feels when the name of God is thus abused; if notorious and irreclaimable offenders, in this way, were properly convicted and restrained by the authority of law, this itself might have a most desirable influence; for it ought to be observed, that tho' the authority and restraint of human laws cannot immediately change the hearts of men, or make them real converts to piety and virtue; yet when open acts of wickedness are, in this way, punished and restrained, the influence of bad examples will become less common and extensive; whereas their influence must spread so much the faster and the more extensively, that out-

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ward acts of wickedness are committed with impunity and without disguise.

In all cases of this nature, where example has a catching and infectious influence, it is of great importance to society, that hurtful immoralities, tho' they cannot be totally prevented or restrained, be however rendered timorous and modest, and forced into retirement and obscurity by the execution and restraint of human laws.

But, passing over these and the like expedients, by which it must be owned, that little more can be proposed than to curb the impudence of this enormity, I would further notice, that the only method of destroying it, and of pulling it up from the foundation, is the sober and religious education of our children, and the forming of

them, in their earlier years, to a serious sense of God, and a reverend attendance on the sacred institutions of his service.

Was a child accustomed from his earliest years, to conceive and speak of God, as the object of his highest honour and esteem; was he led by the instructions and example of his parents (for both are indispensable) to attend, with a devout regard, on the sacred institutions of the gospel, where the name and works of God are never mentioned, but with proper marks of that regard and veneration which is due to them; this, by the blessing of the Almighty, would effectually prevent the spreading of that wickedness of which I have been discoursing. On the one hand, it is impossible to

cherish in our minds a serious sense of God, and to worship him "with reverence and godly fear;" and, at the same time, to prostitute his name, in the irreverent and disrespectful manner that is done by this profanity. In the words of our apostle, "out of the same mouth such blessing and cursing will not readily proceed, "as a fountain doth not send forth at the same place sweet and bitter water." On the other hand, it is equally impossible to indulge in this profanity, and yet to worship God "with reverence and godly fear:" that indifference and disrespect, with which the practice is accompanied, will undoubtedly destroy that inward reverence for God, by which we "worship him in spirit and in truth;" and without

which all outward acts of worship are insignificant and empty forms. In our present situation, therefore, Parents are reduced to the following alternative, either to bring up their children in the fear of God, and in such a serious regard for the institutions of the gospel, as shall probably protect them from the contagious influence of this impiety; or, by their negligence in this respect, to send them into the world, guardless and unfortified against the sad examples to which they are to be exposed, and thus in danger of being led into a dissolute contempt of every thing that is sacred and religious.

Before I finish this discourse, I would beg leave to offer two exhortations, agreeably to what has been delivered on this

subject: the first to parents; and the second to their children.

My first exhortation is addressed to parents. Unto you, my friends, a most important province is committed, by the providence of God, and, by his blessing, much may be expected from your influence, if properly employed. Under him, the virtue and happiness of the succeeding age principally depend upon your conduct. The minds of children are soft and tender, and easily susceptible of different impressions, before they are hardened and corrupted by the world; and that authority which nature gives you over them, together with the reverence and love which it teaches them to feel for you, gives you a peculiar influence in the forming of

their character. Consider, therefore, the importance of your trust, and employ with proper care that precious influence which Providence hath given you, to train up your children "in the way that they should go." Remember the distinguished honour with which the father of the faithful stands recorded in the sacred history, Gen. xviii. 18, 19. "Abraham shall surely be-
" come a great and mighty nation, and all
" the nations of the earth shall be blessed
" in him. For I know him, that he will
" command his children and his household
" after him, and they shall keep the way
" of the Lord, to do justice and judgment,
" that the Lord may bring upon Abra-
" ham that which he hath spoken of him."
Imitate the great and amiable pattern.

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By your instructions and example, and by every method in your power, strive to form them to an early veneration for the government and works of God; fix it as the first and the deepest impression in their hearts, that the fear of God is the beginning of their wisdom, and the only solid and immovable foundation of their future happiness; teach them that the rules of integrity and truth, of temperance and modesty, industry and charity, which you recommend to their esteem, are the statutes of Jehovah's kingdom, and stamped with his authority; that they are the measures, which the great Ruler of the world hath prescribed, by which alone mankind can attain to happiness and peace, under his administration; that, by violating these, they will oppose

the government and will of God, provoke his indignation against themselves ; and therefore must be miserable.

Add to these instructions, examples from the history of former times, or from the present experience of life around them, of the honour, the security, and happiness, which virtue and religion give, and of the infamy and misery which flow from vice and immorality. From thence conduct their views to the great and everlasting consequences of a religious or wicked life in a future world, of which we are assured by the gospel of the Son of God. Let them be able to observe from the whole strain and spirit of your conversation, that from the exercise of piety to God, and the obedience of his laws, you yourselves de-

rive the chief happiness and comfort of your lives; and that your friendship and affection to your children, engages your sollicitude to lead them to the same fountains of security and happiness: that while you labour by an honest industry to make a suitable provision for their temporal prosperity, and to send them into the world in a reputable station among men, you are still more sollicitous to plant the seeds of piety and virtue in their hearts, and to send them into the world as the friends of God: watch with a particular attention, on such incidents and opportunities, as may put it in your power to convey these instructions to their hearts, in the gentlest and softest manner; and in such a way as may prevent, as much as possible, the appearance of severity and

constraint. This alone is likely to produce an effectual reformation of our manners.

But all this care, it may be thought, would require a greater share of time and attention, than can easily be spared from the useful business and industry of life.

It would be truly an unfortunate and lamentable thing, if the industry, which is conducive to the welfare of society; was inconsistent with the attention which is requisite to the religious education of the rising generation. This however, it is hoped, is not the case. Were the unemployed and vacant hours of life, and which are spent in indolence and luxury, devoted to the virtuous cultivation and improvement of the minds of children, much desirable fruit might be expected from our

labour: even in this way, we might expect to see them happily impressed with an early reverence for God, and guarded by a sense of the solemn obligations of religion, before they are exposed to the temptations and examples of the world into which they are to go.

But supposing this to be the case, and that some small interruption should be given to the course of secular affairs, by the time and attention requisite to be employed in forming the minds of children to a sense of God, and of the obligations of religion; would not society, however, reap great advantage on the whole, from the regularity, sobriety, industry, and other useful virtues, which we might expect to see in their future conduct, as the conse-

quence of such an education? For a religious education, if properly directed, is the immediate promoter and encourager of all the virtues which contribute to the welfare of society ; and the genuine principles of Christianity, when fairly set before the minds of children, will enforce them on their hearts with a peculiar authority. By these they shall be led to “ whatsoever
“ things are true, to whatsoever things
“ are honest, to whatsoever things are just,
“ to whatsoever things are pure, to whatsoever things are lovely, and to whatsoever things are of good report.” Particular families, withal, would in this way, have their interests promoted in the most substantial manner. Tho’ parents were obliged to abate somewhat of the earnest-

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ness and assiduity by which they labour to enrich their families, in order to bestow a proper share of their time and attention on their religious instruction and improvement, and should leave them in the issue a smaller share of opulence and wealth, they would, nevertheless, do them an infinitely kinder office on the whole, and far more effectually provide for their future happiness in this world, and to eternity†: nay, without a proper care and

† On this subject it is natural to remark, the great importance of the Christian Sabbath. This benevolent institution was designed to be a recess from the common business of life; that during this recess, men might give attention to the works of God, and the important obligations of religion and morality; to which, at other times, they

are apt to give too short and superficial an attention: and it cannot be doubted, but that, in a special manner, it was designed, that during this agreeable recess, a more particular attention should be given to the religious instruction and improvement of the minds of children, than can easily be given to it at other times. Should this institution, there-

attention in this matter, what are parents doing for their children, by all their other industry and labour? They are only furnishing them with the means of extravagance and luxury, and hereby laying the foundation of their future misery: instead
“ of giving to their children bread, they
“ are giving them a stone; and for a fish,
“ they are giving them a serpent.

2. My second exhortation is addressed to the rising generation, and the younger part of the assembly. Be assured of it, O my children, that an early reverence for God, and an early dedication of yourselves unto his service, is the beginning of all

fore, fall into contempt, or be turned into a day of business or pleasure, among other fatal consequences, we should have reason to apprehend,

that a total interruption would ensue in the care which ought to be employed in the instruction and improvement of the rising age.

wisdom, and the only certain and immovable foundation of your happiness and peace. In every other course of life, however promising and pleasant it may seem to be, you will lay the foundation of your future shame, repentance, and remorse; “ you will go as an ox goeth to the slaughter, or as a fool goeth to the correction of the stocks, till a dart strike thro’ your liver, as a bird hastneth to the snare, and knoweth not that it is for his life.” Listen then with modesty and candour to the lessons of religion that are given you in your earlier years.

You are soon to go into the world where innumerable snares, and sad examples are spread for your destruction. Be upon your guard, and fly from the de-

struction. In a special manner fly from that irreverent abuse of the holy name of God, of which you have been hearing; a thing so odious in itself, and which will draw alongst with it a contempt of every thing that should be holy and religious in your eyes.

Think, whether is it better to go into the world, despising and blaspheming your Creator, or blessing and adoring him, and making him your friend; blessing and adoring him, in whom the perfection of goodness dwells, making him your friend, whose friendship is of more importance to your happiness, than all the world besides: whether is it better to live, in opposition to the will of your Creator, with falshood and dishonesty, de-

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bauchery and riot, idleness and discord; or in compliance with the will of your Creator, to live with truth, honesty, and justice, with sobriety, and modesty, industry and peace? Can you hesitate a moment in determining to which of these the preference is due? Is not the last of these the most excellent and amiable conduct in itself? is it not the only course in which you can securely promise to yourselves any lasting comfort and tranquillity? In this course God will be your father, your protector, and your friend; he will be your guide even unto death; and after death he will receive you into the glorious inheritance of his children. But, by the opposite behaviour, by forgetting and despising God, you will forfeit the protection of his pro-

vidence; nay, provoke his indignation against yourselves, and be forced, at length, on a review of your former life, to mourn with bitterness and anguish; saying, "How
 " have we hated instruction, and our
 " hearts despised reproof, and have not
 " obeyed the voice of our teachers, nor
 " inclined our ears to them who instructed us? Hearken, therefore, children,
 " and receive the words of wisdom, take
 " fast hold of her instructions, let them
 " not go; keep them, for they are your
 " life. Remember now your Creator in
 " the days of youth, while the evil days
 " come not, nor the years draw nigh in
 " which you will be forced to say, we
 " have no pleasure in them.

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